

CRANBROOK

ARCHIVES

William J. (1923-1992) and Jane Comfort Brown Papers

.2 linear feet

Acquisition Number:	1995-23
Acquisition:	The collection was donated to the Cranbrook Archives by Jane Comfort Brown.
Access:	Access to the collection is unrestricted.
Copyright:	Copyright to this collection is held by the Cranbrook Educational Community.
Preferred Citation:	William J. and Jane Comfort Brown Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
Audio/Visual:	Removed to the Videotape Collection.
Processing:	Leslie S. Edwards, Aug 2011



History

William Joseph Brown was born 10 Mar 1923 in Flint, Michigan. He graduated from Fenton High School in 1941, attended Flint Junior College (1942) and Western Michigan College before attending Cranbrook Academy of Art in the summer of 1946 under the G.I. Bill of 1944. He received his B.F.A. in May 1949; and his M.F.A. the following year. His primary focus was sculpture and metalsmithing and he studied under Jon Johnson, William McVey, Bernard “Tex” Schiewitz, Ted Luderowski and Richard Thomas. During the summer of 1948, Brown was one of twelve chosen to work at Corning Glass Works for the summer.

After leaving Cranbrook in 1950, he worked as the Assistant Director of the Flint Institute of Arts, was Design Instructor at the University of Delaware (1951-1956) and at the Craft Center in Worcester, MA (1957-1961). For twelve years, he also worked summers at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. In 1962, Brown became the second Director of the Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina, chosen by founder Lucy Morgan. During his tenure, he established the Penland School Artist Resident Program, formalized a visiting artists program, and shifted the school program from leisure crafts to the study of crafts as a profession. After his retirement in 1983, Brown served as Director Emeritus and continued with his own artwork.

In 1991, Brown received the North Carolina Award in Fine Arts for his many contributions towards the renaissance of American crafts. William Brown passed away 24 Oct 1992 from Alzheimers.

Jane Comfort Brown received her B.A. in Education from the University of Delaware in 1954 and her Masters Degree in Special Education: Learning Disabilities from American University in 1985. She began her study of the Alexander Technique in 1975 under the renowned Marjorie L. Barstow. Ms. Brown is a teaching member of the Alexander Technique International at the Hayes School of Music, Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C.

Scope and Content of Collection

This small collection primarily consists of materials relative to Brown’s tenure at Penland, and the 1991 Award he received. Most of the material is duplicate material from the William J. and Jane Comfort Brown Papers held at the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art.

Box Number--Description

Box 1

1. Biographical, 1979, 1984, 1993
2. North Carolina Award for Fine Arts, 1990-1991
3. Exhibition Catalog – Kent State University, 1994
4. Glass Art Society – Anniversary Conference, 1995
5. Glass Art Society – Anniversary Conference, Publications, 1995